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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventieth year

Identical letters dated 27 February 2015 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

In follow-up to my recent letter regarding the vile terror attacks being committed by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians and properties, I regret to inform you of another attack, committed yesterday on a Christian holy site. Such vicious attacks, directly aimed at insulting and intimidating Palestinian Muslims and Christians, are inflaming religious sensitivities and tensions and risk instigating the outbreak of a religious war, with all of the grave ramifications in this regard.

Yesterday, 26 February, extremist Israeli settlers set fire to a Christian seminary belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church in the Old City of Occupied East Jerusalem. Extensive damage was caused by this blatant act of terrorism, including the burning of a schoolroom in the seminary and the spray-painting of hate graffiti about Jesus on the seminary's walls consisting of vulgar and offensive words that cannot be printed in such diplomatic correspondence. This crime comes on the heels of the attack, committed a day earlier, on a mosque in the village of Jaba'a in the Bethlehem area, where Israeli settlers also burned the mosque and defiled its walls with graffiti.

Such attacks have been repeatedly perpetrated by gangs of racist, extremist and terrorist Israeli settlers who have been deliberately transferred to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, by Israel, the occupying Power, in grave breach of international law. As such, Israel bears ultimate responsibility for the presence of the settlers on our land and for all of their crimes, including all acts of terror.

It is clear that attacks against Palestinian Christian and Muslim holy sites are intended to terrorize and intimidate the Palestinian people, an objective shamelessly claimed by settlers carrying out this violent campaign, which they have dubbed as "price tag" attacks for years, as well as by settler leaders, some of them members of the Israeli Government. Such attacks are perpetrated daily in the form of assaults on

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Palestinian school children, in brutal attacks against Palestinian farmers and shepherds, in vehicular attacks by settlers running over Palestinian civilians and countless acts of property destruction and vandalism. In addition to the recent attacks on the mosque and the church, another attack yesterday involved the vandalism of a school in the Palestinian village of Urif, near Nablus, where terrorists associated with the so-called "hilltop youth" settler group spray-painted "Death to the Arabs" on the walls of the school.

It must be reiterated that all such criminal actions are the responsibility of the occupying Power and are part of its illegal, destructive settlement campaign in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. In this regard, as indicated in our recent letters and in various United Nations reports, Israeli settlement activities continue unabated, escalating with every passing year. As reported by the Israeli organization Peace Now, the year 2014 witnessed a 40 per cent increase in Israeli settlement activities, a 10-year high, and thousands of units are under construction and tens of thousands more are planned, further fragmenting our State's contiguity and territorial integrity.

Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable for all of these illegal policies and practices, by which it has expropriated and colonized Palestinian land, forcibly displaced hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians and stolen unquantifiable amounts of natural resources from Palestine. Moreover, this colonization campaign must be immediately stopped before it renders meaningless and physically impossible the two-State solution. The international community, including the Security Council, must no longer tolerate the contempt of the Israeli Government for the global, unanimous demands to cease all settlement activities in the Palestinian territory it has occupied militarily since June 1967.

We thus reiterate our call on the Security Council to unequivocally reiterate its demand to Israel, the occupying Power, to cease all settlement activities throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in accordance with international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. This is a sine quo non for ending the occupation and for salvaging the two-State solution and must be a central pillar of any genuine push for a just and peaceful solution. The Security Council bears a clear responsibility for promoting such a peaceful solution in accordance with its duty under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council must heed the appeals of the international community to overcome its paralysis vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to act with intent to contribute to the achievement of a solution.

In the case of continued Israeli violations, condemnation and appeals for cessation will no longer suffice and the Security Council must undertake specific measures to compel compliance by the occupying Power. Moreover, in this regard, we stress the legitimacy of all peaceful means of ensuring respect of international law, including accountability and redress through the International Criminal Court, to which the State of Palestine will soon become the 123rd State party.

The chances for peace are contingent on halting the Israeli settlement campaign, which is at the core of this illegitimate military occupation of Palestine and the prolonged conflict. A failure to rectify this situation will only foster greater Israeli impunity, bringing even more insecurity, including rising terror by settlers

emboldened by the lack of accountability, further entrenching the occupation and a fait accompli on the ground and cementing an end to the two-State solution.

This letter is in follow-up to our 538 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 25 February 2015 (A/ES-10/674-S/2015/139) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed against the Palestinian people, by Israel, the occupying Power, for which it must be held accountable and the perpetrators be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations